



No 27 DECEMBER 1976

OTTOLANGUI'S IMMEDIATE GO-AHEAD

"AT LAST it's ours" said Graham Parsey following the crucial meeting in October with Council leader Martin Ottolangui and Cllr Bob Masters, with a small group of resident representatives. The meeting had been called to try to resolve the three year effort to obtain the vacant factory at No 12 Upton Road for community use.

The scheme - which was covered in De Beaver 17 as long ago as September 74 - will provide for all-year covered play space adjacent to the adventure park, accommodation for youth activities, and in the longer term a sports hall, meeting hall and a centre for local groups. Providing complementary activities to the nearby Rose Lipman Centre, the scheme will form part of the proposed mini-park which will be constructed on the vacant former pre-fab sites at the junction of Upton and Downham Roads in a couple of years time.

Martin Ottolangui confirmed that since the residents were not seeking any annual grants towards the running of the project there was no obstacle to an immediate go-ahead, and also no need to go back through all the Council committees, since the scheme had been agreed in principle in January 1975.

MYSTIFIED

However the residents are now mystified because, despite the leader keeping his undertaking and directing the Officers to make an immediate start, they now understand that the Officers insist that it must yet again go through all the Council committees, causing further delay, and that the decision arrived too late to be dealt with before January at the earliest.

COUNCIL FAILS TENANTS

HACKNEY COUNCIL is failing to use its powers to make landlords improve living conditions in privately rented homes in De Beauvoir - even in general improvement areas in which the Council is supposed to be encouraging and enforcing improvements.

Residents on the Council's official GIA housing committee are disheartened by the lack of progress. Says one member "How can they expect us to carry on going to meetings, passing houses we know are in disrepair on the way, and then just sit there talking?"

One house in De Beauvoir Rd - is half demolished, and now the District Surveyor has intervened and put a dangerous structure notice on the property. Families are living in other poor and unimproved houses in the GIAs six years after the first GIA was declared.

COUNCIL CAN BUY

The Council can buy neglected houses, compulsorily or by agreement, or it can serve compulsory improvement notices on landlords. But so far it has



NICK ON STAGE

photo: ROGER PERRY

NICK EDMETT, the fast rising cabaret star, has been booked for December 18th at the Rose Lipman, for the CANDLELIGHT CABARET PARTY (Tickets £1.50, all proceeds towards the Upton Road Factory Project and the Adventure Playground).

We went to see his show at the Trashed in Woolwich, with Doris and Peter Kibblewhite, and had a smashing evening. He danced and sang and tore the heart-strings not only from Marlene, as seen above (yes, there is a beard as well) but also from Kipling and Shakespeare. He was backed up by an excellent variety of singing acts. Everybody was brought into the show, there was rhyming slang, games and asides. The excitement and involvement really worked up, and at the end we didn't want to go home!

On December 18th he will be with the Free Form Cabaret, with Jane Lee, Noreen Kershaw and Martin Goodrich.

Food will be included in the ticket price, and there will be a licensed bar and disco. So make note of the date: 18 December; time: 7 till 11; and get your tickets at the Rose Lipman Library.

Guy Gervis

not used the compulsory purchase or improvement powers, although officers are considering serving a notice on one house in Upton Road.

RARELY REHOUSE

Another failing of the Council is that it will rarely, if ever, rehouse tenants, either temporarily or permanently to allow landlords to improve their properties. So the work goes on around their heads, as has happened recently to a woman in Englefield Road, or the landlord refuses to begin work.

LOCAL INITIATIVE

The residents' steering committee recommended use of compulsory purchase in its first report (a report which was widely praised). But the Council has ignored that recommendation. Mrs Marjorie Young, a tenants' representative, has twice taken initiatives, the first time to get tenants in De Beauvoir Square to serve notices themselves, the second time to lead a deputation to the Council.

Last year Councillor Stuart Weir put forward a proposal in the Council chamber that Hackney should compulsorily acquire neglected houses in the GIAs. The Council amended this to cover neglected houses throughout the Borough of Hackney, but it's just talk. They actually do nothing.

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SHORE: 'KEEP COMMUNITIES'



photo: GRAHAM PARSEY

PETER SHORE GREETES THE HOWETTS

PETER SHORE, Environment Minister, came to De Beauvoir on November 17th to open No 107a Mortimer Road, one of the new Council system-built houses at the corner of Englefield Road where the library used to stand.

He handed over the keys to the new tenants Derick and Doreen Howett and their daughters Debra, Diana and Amanda, at a ceremony attended by local MP's Ron Brown and Stanley Clinton Davies, the Mayor and Council leaders headed by Martin Ottolangui.

DELIGHTED

After 17 years on the housing list the Howetts were delighted with their new home, away from their Stoke Newington basement to a centrally heated 3 storey house with inside WC, a bathroom and hot water at last.

Explaining why a cabinet minister should visit De Beauvoir expressly to open a comparatively small development, Peter Shore said that the Council's policies in the De Beauvoir area represented the very kind of policy that his department were pursuing for urban renewal in inner city areas.

PRESERVE THE STREET

"The days of the bulldozer are over," he said. "In the community life of Inner London, the street has played as important a part as the village has in rural life. I think we do now recognise the importance of preserving the street and preserving what people know and understand."

Whilst stressing that the earlier schemes were right at the time, he continued: "Most of us recognise that the design of housing on these large cleared sites was often ill-conceived and that in going for tower blocks or large block estates insufficient account was taken of the human factor. We must keep communities together."

No 107a is the 100th house completed in the borough by the Quickbild system, the other sites in De Beauvoir are at Hertford, De Beauvoir and Ardleigh Rds.

Graham Parsey

What do other tenants think of the new houses? Ann Humphry went to Ardleigh Rd to find out.

see page 2



photo: JEREMY HAMAND

HELEN VIEWS THE DAMAGE

EXAMINING THE HOLE in her garden wall, Helen Rosenfeld wonders how many accidents there will have to be at the junction of Buckingham and Culford Rds before the road signing there is improved.

The hole in the wall, on the Buckingham Rd side of 141 Culford Rd, appeared during the last week in October when a car careered across the pavement on the rebound after one of the frequent accidents at the junction.

"If it had happened at the same time a few weeks earlier, children would have been playing on the pavement at that very spot. Fortunately it was

dark when the crash took place, and the children had gone in."

INADEQUATE MARKING

"Buckingham Rd is inadequately marked and without signs at this junction," she says. "Traffic heading westwards has priority at the De Beauvoir Road junction and expects the Culford Road junction to be the same. In poor light or when the sun is setting, the lines on the road are almost invisible."

The Council claims to have had no letters of complaint from the public about the junction, although Helen Rosenfeld says she has written to them twice without response.

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LOO ON HIS DOORSTEP

THE RESIDENTS of Ufton Grove and Ufton Road could scarcely believe their eyes last August when they saw a toilet block being built in the back garden of number 110 Southgate Road, which runs down the side of Ufton Grove. Do we need a public convenience here? they asked one another.

"We might as well have had a public convenience built in the road itself," said Mrs. Mabel Hall, the Ufton representative on the advisory committee of the General Improvement Area.

Just as the roof stage of the toilets was reached, the new owners of No.16 Ufton Grove, Ann and Derek Humphry, arrived to move in and were amazed to see what was happening within 20 feet of their front door.

NO PLANNING APPLICATION Considerably staggered at this, Mr. Humphry cycled down to the Town Hall and asked to look at the Planning Register. It contained no mention of any planning application for No.110, which is owned by the Benyon Trust and managed by Brown and Brown.

The last occupants were squatters but previously Mr. A. Hawkins (who died two years ago) had run his photographic business from the outbuildings.

Complaints to the Town Hall Planning Department by Mrs. Hall and Mr. Humphry brought responses that the matter was being looked into. Mr. Humphry wrote to Brown and Brown for clarification. The firm's reply brought no mention of there being a toilet block.

'ILL-INFORMED'? Brown and Brown expressed annoyance that they had been the subject of "so much rumour circulated during the last few months by ill-informed persons". Explaining "The use of the premises has yet to be finalised but there is no question of their being allowed to be occupied as a factory."

Yet the Planning Department had no illusions about it being a toilet. "I would inform you that the building of the toilet block falls within Class IV of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order, 1973," wrote Mr. T.R.W. Roberts, the Borough Architect and Planning Officer.

"Whatever class of whichever order it is, it looks ghastly," Mr. Humphry told De Beaver.

BELATED

The Planning Department is in no doubt that the other building works, to the walls surrounding the loo block, are unauthorised.

But that is of little consequence, because Mr. Roberts said in his last letter: "An application will be submitted by Messrs. Brown and Brown to

JUBILEE WALK?

THERE IS STILL no definite date for the opening of the towpath through Hackney but several things have happened in recent months.

Many walkers in the new town will have seen the towpath being dug up during the summer. A cable trench has been laid and the towpath restored as a concrete slab walkway. The earth areas next to the walkway have yet to be turfed or planted and steps down to the towpath level will be needed before the pleasures of a canalside walk to Victoria Park are open to all. The towpath in Islington has been opened already for a couple of years. Recently it was extended as far as Stert's

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THE FIRST TENANTS have now moved into the new terraced houses scattered throughout De Beauvoir which are completely new, but have been designed to fit in with the local style of architecture.

Standing on sites where bombs fell during the war, they replace outcrops of post-war 'prefabs', although for reasons best known to Hackney Council and the GLC the four sites have been unoccupied (except for vegetable gardeners - see De Beaver December '74) for four and a half years until now.

IN KEEPING

The objective of the project has been to fill these sites with homes in keeping with the building style of the mid-1800's, yet much cheaper to build than traditionally-built houses would have been. Construction is by the use of wooden frames clad with bricks matching those used in the rest of De Beauvoir Town. The houses have wooden sash windows, and where elaborate mouldings on cornices and doorways are needed, simulated fittings have been manufactured from fibreglass.

NEW TENANTS

Each house is equipped with gas central heating and has a hall, utility room, lounge, bathroom, one or two toilets and three bedrooms as well as front and rear gardens. Of the tenants interviewed, about half came from the New Town while the remainder had transferred from other housing in the Borough of Hackney.

GARDENS

Apart from a few minor complaints over the usual moving-in difficulties, residents' level of satisfaction is high and indeed enthusiastic. People find the rooms large and comfortable, the noise level low, and they feel that the front and rear gardens are ideal play areas for small children.

ENTHUSIASM

Some new tenants are worried about the heavy traffic on Ardleigh Road which is the result of Heavy vehicles cutting through from Southgate Road to Englefield Road. However this seems a mere trifle compared to the enthusiasm most people express over their new homes, particularly those mothers with small children who previously endured fourteenth and fifteenth storey flats in tower blocks.

In every case residents are paying a rent which is higher than in their previous accommodation, but they feel that it is worth the extra money. This is obviously the honeymoon period for the new occupants; as one lady observed, "It's just plain lovely to be here, but perhaps too soon to tell everything. Come back in six months' time." Which indeed we will.

Ann Humphry

retain the east wall with raised height and to reduce the north wall to seven feet."

Mr. Humphry commented: "It seems incredible that our planning laws are so weak that you can build something first, in this case the walls, and then ask for permission afterwards."

Lock (behind Arlington Avenue) and includes the "Narrow Boat" public house as a port of call.

NEW BRIDGE

There will be an increasing number of boats using the canal. The newly completed weirs are designed to stop possible flooding of London and mean that crews will be able to pass at all hours, not just lock-keeper hours. The towpath bridge over the entrance to Kingsland Basin has been rebuilt. The old bridge was unsafe and in urgent need of replacement.

WATER FESTIVAL

A big boating attraction next year will be the Water Festival on the canal next to Victoria Park to celebrate the Queen's jubilee. Would it be too much to hope that the towpath will be open by then to allow De Beauvoir residents to walk there by the side of the canal?

Alan Rayner

De Beauvoir Garden Centre

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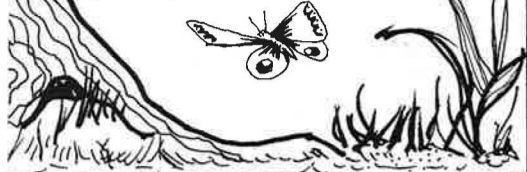
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HEALTH: HOW YOU LOSE OUT

As far as health services are concerned, we live in a deprived district of a deprived area. For example, our health district - Hackney and the City - is worse off for health visitors than any other London district, with only 19, each serving a population of over 11,000. (Tower Hamlets have 1 per 7,600 and South Camden 1 per 3,100.) Our full quota, according to the DoH, would be 70.

Speaking at the De Beauvoir Association AGM, Mr Peter Rockliff, section administrator for our Area, gave more depressing statistics, and forecasts of further cut-backs.

The hospital reorganisation plans he described have been reported at length in the *Hackney Gazette*. But as was pointed out at the AGM, our area and district are not only deprived of adequate resources, they are also deprived of proper popular representation on the official bodies set up to give local people the right to criticise present facilities and future plans.

ALAN RAYNER explains:

IN 1974 the Health Service was reorganised. Gone were the old secret committees deciding what was to happen to our hospitals and clinics. Instead we have Regional, Area and District Health Authorities on which you and I are represented by some of our local councillors. In addition, each district has a Community Health Council (CHC) on which nominated members of the public join with local councillors.

The CHC has the right to inspect local hospitals and clinics and make proposals for improvements as well as commenting on health service proposals, on our behalf.

LOUDER VOICES

In theory the voice of the public is heard. However the voices of some places are heard louder than others. Most London boroughs have either an Area Health Authority to themselves (AHA) or share with just ONE other borough. Within each AHA there are one or two community health councils for the area of each borough. In Hackney we lose out.

Hackney has to share its AHA with THREE other boroughs (Newham, Tower Hamlets and the City of London). This means (among other things) that we have fewer of our councillors on the AHA than do other London boroughs. To have the normal number would make the meetings

too large! So our councillors are outnumbered by health staff and others who know little of Hackney's health problems.

IN THE SHADOW

This might not be so bad if there were a CHC to put the distinctive voice of Hackney. Here again we lose out. Hackney has to share its CHC with the City of London. The City with its prestige (and St. Bartholemews Hospital) puts Hackney's case for more resources right into the shade.

2½ TIMES

All other AHA's have populations lower than ours. Hillingdon has 235,000, Barnet has 307,000, Enfield-Haringey has 508,000, Camden-Islington has 409,000, but East London (ours) has 627,000 - 2½ times that of Hillingdon. Camden has two CHC's (one per 104,000 people) whereas Hackney has half of one CHC (one per 440,000).

HIGH DEATH RATE

The death rate in East London is well over 10% higher than the national average. However East London has but an equal voice to Hillingdon (who have 62½% fewer people and a death rate of 14% under the national average). Even what money does come to East London does not all benefit local people. A lot goes to Bart's (but counts as coming to the City and Hackney). Only 20% of the patients at Bart's are local people - some come from Hillingdon; how many Hackney people use the hospitals of Hillingdon (other than the serious burns unit at Mount Vernon) - ? Is it not about time that Hackney had a fair deal? A community health council of our own would be a good start.

Details of our local CHC are available from Mrs. Pat Gordon at Room 6, The Health Centre, 210 Kingsland Road.

NOISE MISERY ENTERS 2nd year

OCTOBER 29 was to have been a great day in Southgate Grove. The Kafa table company (who produce furniture at 1A Southgate Grove) were to go before the local magistrate and explain why they were still making a noise and disturbing the daytime peace of the local residents. Alas it did not happen and spirits were low as some of these residents left the court to return home in the pouring rain. The previous case (involving drunken driving and a Tasmanian driving licence) ran over its time and so left no time for the summons against Kafa to be heard by the magistrates. All they could offer was a possible date to hear the case next February.

Alan Rayner

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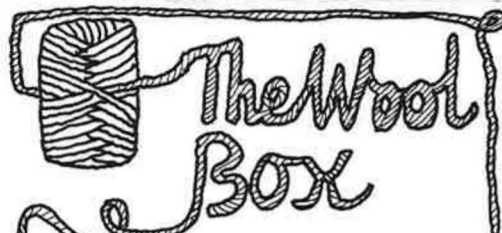
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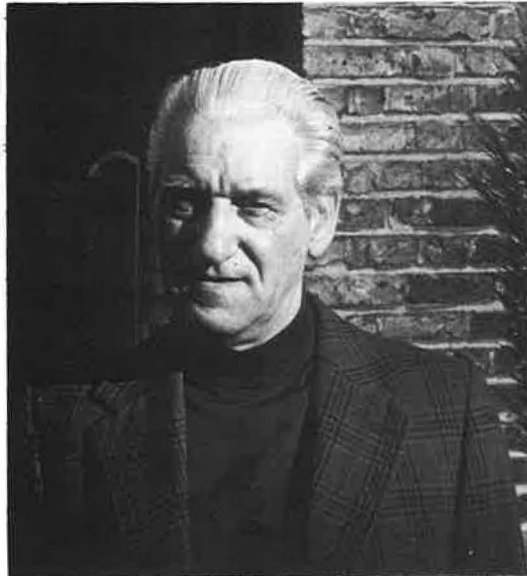
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PEOPLE



Joe Bray~ Seven-year itch

JOE BRAY recently gave up the post of treasurer for the De Beauvoir Association after doing the job since 1969. By far and away the longest-serving DBA officer, Joe felt that the time really had come this year for him to step down from the post, whose responsibilities have taken up a good deal of his spare time during the last seven years.

Joe felt that much had been achieved during his term in office, but that everything took so much longer than had first been hoped, partly because of the slowness of Hackney Council.

Pictured in the back garden of his Northchurch Rd home, Joe recalled that he was one of the first leaseholders in the area to purchase his freehold. The lease went back to 1936 when Joe's father-in-law, a bootmaker, had moved there.

His workshop during the war years was the front room, but Joe has converted the two ground floor rooms into a magnificent living room by taking down part of the dividing wall.

Joe's successor as DBA treasurer is John Gibson.



Rik~

A man for all seasons

RIK - real name Robert Rykins - came to De Beauvoir to run the Ufton Road adventure playground for six weeks in the summer. When the kids kept asking why the playground had to shut down at the end of the summer holiday, Rik, a third year student at the Middlesex Poly, decided to stay on at De Beauvoir and build his thesis around our playground and the kids who go there, rather than take up a research project at Lancaster, as he'd originally planned.

Deeply interested in the general play needs of children - especially those being brought up in an urban, high-rise environment like the tower blocks in the New Town - Rik aims to offer kids an atmosphere of freedom and adventure at a minimum of risk.

Continuity is basic to the success of the playground project, and here there is hope of long-term financial aid. On the site progress is being made. Most of the rubbish has been cleared, and paintings are appearing on the surrounding fences. Old structures have been strengthened and new ones built.

Rik wants to see the playground linked



Peter Kibblewhite~ Business as usual

PETER KIBBLEWHITE, seen in our photo busily engaged in framing another picture, finally moved on November 25th with wife Doris to their new home in Winchester, Peter will however continue his business from 22, Egbert Rd, Winchester, Hants, and visits London frequently for deliveries and collections.

more closely with the community. Already a very successful barbecue has been held and a bonfire was lit on Guy Fawkes night. There is a pressing need for indoor facilities for winter evenings, with a coffee bar and general meeting space. (Hopefully, these can now be provided in the Ufton Road factory - see front page).

Resourceful as he is, Rik can still do with help from local people, especially in providing materials - timber, nails, paint, old tyres, tins, almost anything! Just drop round to Ufton Road (Rik is there every day except Sunday and Monday, from midday until 6 or 7). And come to the open meeting of the management committee, to be held in St Peter's crypt on December 13 at 7.30. Among subjects discussed will be plans for the Christmas play scheme.

Peter Batty

BARGAIN TREES for JUBILEES

YOU WILL BE GIVEN an unrepeatable opportunity to buy high quality garden trees at special discount prices at an exhibition which is to be held in January in the Rose Lipman Library.

The scheme, outlined in July De Beaver, involves a method of placing a bulk order for the community at contract prices of the tree or trees of your choice. The offer is open to all residents of the area.

The exhibition, which is being mounted by the GIA Residents Committee with co-operation from the Planning Department, Notcutts Nurseries and the Libraries service, will show residents what is available, prices, how to avoid the pitfalls of the wrong choice, with advice on planting, after-care or simply how best to look after your existing trees.

Special emphasis will be given to trees that do not grow too large and are

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Orders will close soon after the exhibition and delivery will be made to the locality in mid-March for planting by April, within the planting season.

We want to put trees back into De Beauvoir, but the right species this time.

"And why not New Town tenants clubbing together to plant trees for the Jubilee around the Estate?"

LIPMAN DIARY

For full details of Christmas activities have a look in Rose Lipman library. Tickets for the children's party available from December 16th. The party is on Wednesday December 22nd. from 5.30 to 8pm - FREE for 5 - 12 year olds. Parents most welcome. Happy Christmas to all our borrowers!

De Beaver 96, BUCKINGHAM RD NI

De Beaver 45, BUCKINGHAM RD NI

is a FREE community newspaper for the people of De Beauvoir - old and new towns. We are sponsored by the De Beauvoir Association, but we're here for everybody, not just association members. So please send us your news, pictures, ideas, criticisms by 28 Feb for the next issue. Thanks to everyone who has helped produce this issue and deliver it round the area.

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